

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2013 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 23

Summer Update # 3, Districts 1-6

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Assessment Projects

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)- 8.5-inch set net project/ADF&G, YDFDA

The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE through June 23 is approximately 1.86, which is well below the historical cumulative average of 10.94 for this date. The project continues to be hindered due to high water and debris.

The cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE with 8.25-inch drift gillnet through June 23 is approximately 88.

Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery- 5.5-inch drift net project/ADFG, YDFDA

The cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE through June 23 is approximately 775 which is below the historical median of approximately 1,760 for this date.

Andreafsky River weir/USFWS

The weir has not been installed due to high water. Staff are at the site and the weir will be in place as soon as possible.

Pilot Station sonar project/ADFG

Chinook salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be approximately 52,000 fish through June 23, which is below the historic average of 71,000 for this date. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be approximately 926,000, which is well above the median of 499,000 for this date.

Anvik River sonar project/ADFG

The Anvik River sonar project became fully operational on June 16. Summer chum salmon passage through June 23 is estimated to be approximately 2,000, which is below the historic median of 4,000 for this date.

Gisasa River weir/USFWS

The Gisasa River weir was fully operational on June 20. As of June 24, no salmon have been recorded.

NOTE: Other assessment projects will be added as they become operational.

Age Composition

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.5-inch LYTF set nets through June 23 was 2% age-4, 29% age-5, 68% age-6, and 1% age-7 fish. Females were 56%. The sample size was 172 fish.

The chum salmon age composition from the 5.5-inch LYTF drift nets through June 23 was 33% age-4, 65% age-5, and 2% age-6 fish. Females were 55%. The sample size was 353 fish.

The chum salmon age composition from the beach seine and dipnet commercial fishery through June 23 was 32% age-4, 65% age-5, and 3% age-6 fish. Females were 44%. The sample size was 480 fish.

Assessment

The Chinook salmon run began entering the river exceptionally late and is now tracking later than average years, but is no longer as late as the 2012 run. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate of approximately 52,000 Chinook salmon through June 23 is below the historical average of 71,000 for this date and is above the average passage estimate of 33,500 at this point for late run years. The historical average first quartile of the run at the Pilot Station sonar is June 19. Current data suggest the 2013 first quartile at Pilot Station sonar was approximately June 22, with the first pulse of Chinook salmon passing Pilot Station sonar June 21 through June 23. Based on current data and historical timing associated with a slightly later than average run, the 2013 Chinook salmon run size may approach or exceed the upper end of the preseason outlook estimate range of 96,000 to 144,000.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the first pulse of Chinook salmon past LYTF and Pilot Station sonar should be completed in the next couple of days.

Summer chum salmon passage through June 23 at Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be approximately 926,000, which is well above the historical median of 499,000 for this date. The historical first quartile of the summer chum salmon run at Pilot Station is June 22. Current data suggest the first quartile of the 2013 run passed Pilot Station sonar on approximately June 22. Based on historical run timing, the summer chum salmon run is on track to exceed the preseason outlook estimate of 1.3-1.5 million and may be in the range of 2.5 to 3.0 million fish.

Management Strategies

Consistent with preseason management strategies, subsistence salmon gillnets are being restricted throughout the drainage to no larger than 6 inches beginning with the start of the salmon migration in each district. Fishing periods with gillnets have been canceled in lower river districts to protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon. Similar actions will be implemented in upriver fishing districts based on migratory timing as Chinook salmon travel upstream. Based on the assessment information to date, the current projections are for a total run size near the upper end of the outlook range. However, in response to the poor run sizes observed in recent years and difficulties in meeting escapement goals, it is warranted to continue to conservatively manage the Chinook salmon run. As confidence is gained in the inseason run size projection and the likelihood of meeting escapement objectives increases, restrictions to subsistence opportunity may be relaxed.

The summer chum salmon run appears to be much stronger than anticipated, opportunity will be provided to target the summer chum when and where available in both the subsistence and commercial fisheries.

Current Management

Subsistence Fishing:

For the current subsistence schedule please call **(toll free): 1-866-479-7387**. The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: The Coastal District has been further subdivided into two management areas to allow for more management precision and flexibility when altering the subsistence salmon fishing schedule to conserve Chinook salmon.

In the northern portion of the Coastal District from 62 degrees North latitude to Point Romanof and 3 miles offshore, subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed and will remain closed until further notice to provide protection to Chinook salmon prior to entering the river.

In the southern portion of the Coastal District, from the Naskonat Peninsula north to 62° North latitude, the current subsistence salmon fishing schedule remains unaltered and is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

District 1: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 1 with beach seine and dip net gear only will be open for the following times:

12:00 noon Monday, June 24, until 12:00 midnight Monday, June 24

12:00 noon Tuesday, June 25, until 12:00 midnight Tuesday, June 25

12:00 noon Wednesday, June 26, until 12:00 midnight Wednesday, June 26

Subsistence fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from these gear types.

District 1, which includes the Black River, is currently closed to subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets and will remain closed during the next scheduled subsistence salmon fishing period which was to begin at 8:00 p.m. Monday, June 24, to conserve Chinook salmon.

District 2: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 2 with beach seine and dip net gear only will be open for the following times:

12:00 noon Monday, June 24, until 12:00 midnight Monday, June 24

12:00 noon Tuesday, June 25, until 12:00 midnight Tuesday, June 25

12:00 noon Wednesday, June 26, until 12:00 midnight Wednesday, June 26

12:00 noon Thursday, June 27, until 12:00 midnight Thursday, June 27

Subsistence fishermen are required to immediately release Chinook salmon alive from these gear types.

District 2 is currently closed to subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets and will remain closed during the subsistence salmon fishing period which was scheduled to begin at 8:00 p.m. Sunday, June 23, to protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon as it passes through this district.

District 3: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 3 is currently open with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon. District 3 will close at 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, June 25, and will remain closed during the next subsistence salmon fishing period which was scheduled to begin at 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, June 26, to protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon as it passes through this district.

Subdistrict 4-A: Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A consists of two 48-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays and from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon. By regulation, fishermen in Subdistrict 4-A may use drift gillnets during scheduled subsistence salmon fishing periods on the mainstem of the Yukon River from June 10 to July 14.

Subdistrict 4-B, C: Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C consists of two 48-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 p.m. Fridays and from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon.

The closure has been initiated in the lower river and will be similarly implemented in District 4 based on migratory timing. The department will notify fishermen by June 28 concerning the subsistence salmon fishing schedule in District 4.

Subdistricts 5-A,B,C: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open seven days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Effective 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 25, subsistence salmon fishing will consist of two 48-hour periods each week, from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Thursdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays, with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon.

Subdistricts 5-D: Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller. The department will notify fishermen in Subdistrict 5-D by June 27 concerning when gillnets will be restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon.

District 6: The subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 42-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Old Minto Area: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or less.

Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Commercial Fishing:

Under new commercial fishing regulations adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in 2013, the department may by emergency order allow the use of dip nets and beach seines. These new gear options are intended to allow for additional summer chum directed commercial fishing opportunity while allowing for the release of incidentally caught Chinook salmon.

The preliminary commercial harvest in Districts 1 and 2 combined through June 23 is approximately 38,700 summer chum salmon with a reported 243 Chinook salmon released alive.

District 1 Commercial Beach Seine and Dip Net: Commercial salmon fishing in District 1 will be open with beach seine and dip net gear only.

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| Period #7: | 12:00 noon Monday, June 24, until 12:00 midnight Monday, June 24 |
| Period #8: | 12:00 noon Tuesday, June 25, until 12:00 midnight Tuesday, June 25 |
| Period #9: | 12:00 noon Wednesday, June 26, until 12:00 midnight Wednesday, June 26 |

District 2 Commercial Beach Seine and Dip Net: Commercial salmon fishing in District 2 will be open with beach seine and dip net gear only.

Period #4: 12:00 noon Monday, June 24, until 12:00 midnight Monday, June 24
Period #5: 12:00 noon Tuesday, June 25, until 12:00 midnight Tuesday, June 25
Period #6: 12:00 noon Wednesday, June 26, until 12:00 midnight Wednesday, June 26
Period #7: 12:00 noon Thursday, June 27, until 12:00 midnight Thursday, June 27

Fishermen using dip nets or beach seine gear are required to immediately release incidentally caught Chinook salmon back to the water alive. Chinook salmon caught and released must be recorded on a fish ticket. In the event that a Chinook salmon is killed by these gear types, the dead Chinook salmon must be recorded on a fish ticket and forfeited to the state.

Beach seine mesh size is restricted to 4-inch or smaller. Beach seines must be set from the beach and hauled to the beach. Dip net mesh size is restricted to 4.5-inch or smaller. A commercial permit holder may operate up to four dip nets.

The subsistence fishing schedule and recorded fishery announcements will be available 24 hours a day at 1-866-479-7387 (toll free outside of Fairbanks); in Fairbanks, call (907) 459-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the ADFG office in Emmonak at 949-1320 or in Fairbanks at 459-7274. The Emmonak ADF&G office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.